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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 001834

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/WE, EUR/RPM, EUR/ERA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/30/2013

TAGS: [PREL](#) [IT](#) [NATO](#) [ESDP](#)

SUBJECT: ESDP MINI SUMMIT - FRATTINI WILL COME OUT SWINGING
AT GYMNICHE

REF: A) STATE 109725 B) ROME 1776

CLASSIFIED BY: POL MINISTER COUNSELOR TOM COUNTRYMAN. REASON: 1.5 (B)(D).

¶11. (C) SANDRO DE BERNADIN, ESDP DIRECTOR IN THE MFA EUROPEAN INTEGRATION BUREAU, TOLD POLOFF THAT THE GOI WAS AS SURPRISED AS THE USG WITH THE CONTENT OF THE BELGIAN MINI-SUMMIT COMMUNIQUE. HE REITERATED STRONG GOI POSITION OUTLINED REF B: THE GOI WILL NOT SUPPORT ANY INITIATIVE THAT WILL UNDERMINE OR DUPLICATE THE NATO. DE BERNADIN SAID THAT MFA FRATTINI WOULD MAKE CLEAR TO HIS COUNTERPARTS AT THE GYMNICHE IN RHODES THAT THE BELGIAN SUMMIT DOCUMENT IS UNACCEPTABLE; HE WILL ADVISE ALL THAT WILL LISTEN AGAINST ACCEPTING ITS PROPOSALS, AND WILL ENCOURAGE ALL EU MEMBERS TO BRING THE DISCUSSION OF CFSP AND ESDP "BACK TO 15."

¶12. (C) DE BERNADIN SAID HE HAD BEEN IN A MEETING WITH FRATTINI JUST PRIOR TO HIS CONVERSATION WITH POLOFF. FRATTINI WAS "VERY UPSET AND SURPRISED" ABOUT THE LANGUAGE IN THE DECLARATION, BUT HOPED THAT IT WAS DESIGNED TO BE A "CATALYST, OR SHOCK" TO ENCOURAGE MOVEMENT ON ESDP. FRATTINI'S NIGHTMARE SCENARIO, SAID DE BERNADIN, WAS A "MINI-ALLIANCE OF FOUR," COMPETING FOR RESOURCES AND PERSONNEL NOT ONLY WITH NATO, BUT WITH ESDP ITSELF. FRATTINI WOULD DO ALL HE COULD AT THE MAY 2 GYMNICHE AND IN THE RUN-UP TO THE THESSALONIKI SUMMIT TO MOVE THE OTHER FMS AWAY FROM SUCH A SCENARIO.

¶13. (C) FRATTINI'S DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, PASQUALE TERRACIANO, CONVEYED THE SAME MESSAGE TO POL MC. FRATTINI WAS READY TO DEPLOY THE SAME ARGUMENTS HE DID REF B IN ORDER TO PREVENT THE GANG OF FOUR FROM ADVANCING THEIR INITIATIVE. POL MC ASKED IF THE FM WOULD REPEAT HIS OFFER TO ORGANIZE A COUNTER-CONFERENCE OF ITALY, SPAIN AND THE UK. PROBABLY NOT, ANSWERED TERRACCINO BUT HE WOULD NOT HESITATE TO SPEAK OUT PUBLICLY AS WELL AS IN THE CLOSED GYMNICHE SESSION.

¶14. (C) COMMENT: THE MINI-SUMMIT DOCUMENT IS A BLOW NOT ONLY TO ITALY'S VIEWS ON THE PRIMACY OF NATO AND BERLIN-PLUS IN TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY, BUT ALSO TO THE GOI'S HOPES FOR A SUCCESSFUL, POSITIVE EU PRESIDENCY. FIRST, THE WAR IN IRAQ SERIOUSLY JEOPARDIZED CHANCES FOR COMPLETING THE CONVENTION AND INTER-GOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE IN TIME FOR A SECOND "TREATY OF ROME" DURING THE ITALIAN PRESIDENCY. NOW, THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE THE ITALIAN PRESIDENCY WILL HAVE TO EXPEND CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL CAPITAL IN KEEPING THE UNION FROM DRIFTING FURTHER APART OVER THIS ISSUE, RATHER THAN FOCUSING ON PM BERLUSCONI'S GOAL OF CLOSING THE TRANSATLANTIC RIFT. WE EXPECT THEREFORE THAT FRATTINI AND BERLUSCONI WILL WORK HARD BETWEEN NOW AND JULY 1 TO MOVE THE EU SECURITY DIALOGUE BACK ON THE RIGHT TRACK.
SEMBLER

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2003ROME01834 - Classification: CONFIDENTIAL